15 Most Erotic Movies of the 1970s

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During the 70s, we were blessed with some of the best erotic movies ever. A large portion of the world started embracing the extent of the exploitation genre at around this time, and many recurring characters played by sex symbols dominated underground cinema. Mainstream audiences could also enjoy a couple of high-grossing X-rated releases, and topics of sexual liberation managed to foray into the likes of avant-garde cinema as well.

helmed by rebellious, unstoppable visionaries, starring legendary figures who would go on to be remembered and appreciated during the decades that followed. Here is the list of top movies of the erotica genre, ranked based on how sexually stimulating they are.

13. Daughters of Darkness (1971)

Harry Kümel's 'Daughters of Darkness' blends elements of horror and eroticism to give us a visually gripping vintage classic. Newlywed couple Stefan (John Karlen) and Valerie (Danielle Ouimet) check into a hotel for a pause while heading home to England. At the hotel, they meet the mysterious and alluring Elizabeth Báthory (Delphine Seyrig), a countess, and her secretary, Ilona (Andrea Rau). What begins as a casual encounter slowly takes the shape of a twisted experience as Elizabeth's dark truth steadily reveals itself, having separate influences on Stefan and Valerie. Erotic and disturbing in more ways than one, 'Daughters of

12. Black Cobra Woman (1976)

Out of all the most popular sexploitation actresses of the 1970s, I think Laura Gemser would simply have to be my absolute favorite. If not for her breathtaking ethnic charms, her dazzling appearance and surprisingly good acting skills have me on my heels. Here, she takes on quite a daring role, as a dancer in a club whose partner in the act happens to be a cobra (hence, the in-your-face title). Her relationship with a rich playboy forms most of the film's substance, and the plot isn't as interesting as the sheer abundance of nudity and sex scenes presented.

Gemser was never one to take on explicit roles, and so there's nothing here that's too "dangerous". That being said, the music and the atmosphere of the film (one I'd describe as a bit of dark erotica and satire) help exemplify its seductive nature. Joe

can watch the film here.

11. Salon Kitty (1976)

There was a burst of Nazi-related exploitation films during the '70s and early '80s, mostly to do with the 'women-in-prison' genre, and 'Salon Kitty' was one of the better ones to come out under this specific category of film (interestingly, the picture released at a time when the production of such films was at its peak, with old ideas being remade over and over again). Directed by the infamous erotica filmmaker Tinto Brass, this movie is a stand out from the crowd because of its (admittedly dumb) plot that aids its richness in nudity and softcore sex scenes.

While not as erotic as many of Brass' later features, 'Salon Kitty' still arouses with what it has. An all-round silly film mocking the tragic real events that "inspired" it, I would count this one as

appreciate Brass' surreal vision when it comes to approaching his rather distasteful subject materials. The film can be streamed here.

10. Celestine, Maid at Your Service (1974)

Jesus Franco's films are mostly remembered today for their dream-like narratives, captivating cinematography, mesmerizing soundtracks, and connections to all things sex-related. This one stars his wife Lina Romay in the lead role, as a maid in a rich mansion with something of a dark past. It tries to function as a comedy but fails miserably in my opinion. Even then, the quick paced filmmaking strategy incorporated by Franco helps get the audience to stick around in their seats for the whole thing. That, and the fact that nearly all the female characters (and a good

little bit ridiculous) that it's kind of hard to forget. As a piece of film, the story isn't anything smart or memorable, but I really like the ending, mainly because of the way the camera and actors move and emote during it. For anyone looking for an erotic feature, this is definitely a must-watch!

9. Last Tango In Paris (1972)

One of the more controversial picks on this list, 'Last Tango in Paris' is a pretty good film that bases its story, themes, and ideology around the act of lovemaking. It is a lot more serious than the previous picks on the list, maybe even more explicit and graphic as well. It's a rather disturbing film, and Bertolucci has crafted quite the work of art here, but my focus will be on the erotic moments of this two hour feature.

Certainly saddening to think of following the accusations actress Maria Schneider made against both her co-star Marlon Brando

alone) 'Last Tango in Paris' has some very colorful approaches towards sex, and though most of it isn't meant to arouse the viewer in the same way the previous picks have, they are definitely a lot more powerful in their execution, and therefore a lot more effective in the minds of the audience. 'Last Tango in Paris' can be streamed here.

8. Emmanuelle II (1975)

The Emmanuelle films were among the first X-rated movies to garner wide releases around the world. I enjoy the first and third films in the collection as well, but it is the sequel to 1974's 'Emmanuelle' that has found a dedicated fan in me. Celebrated then and now for their good-looking characters and poetic approach towards sexual intercourse, nowhere is this more visible than in 1975's 'Emmanuelle II'. For starters, the soundtrack to the movie (composed by Francis Lai, one of my favorite film

The cinematography feels vaseline'd onto the camera in the way David Hamilton, the famous fashion photographer, shot his images (he also directed a film titled 'Bilitis' (1977) that definitely deserves an honorable mention in a list of this sort), capturing not just the aforementioned intercourse, but also a couple delicate bits involving massages, steam, piercings, and heat scripted with the intention to excite. Sylvia Kristel's beauty only adds to the sensual enchantment that 'Emmanuelle II' has to offer. It fails to deliver a proper story and isn't the best directed film ever, but I don't suppose these criteria are to be taken into consideration when discussing the topic of this article.

7. In the Realm of the Senses (1976)

advertised predominantly as so, something that worked in its favor as people at the time were rushing to see it in theaters. Though I wouldn't classify the film as pornography (as many have done in the past), the sex scenes (a department the film definitely doesn't lack in) do seem to check all the marks that would categorize it likewise. Widely appreciated as an art film, I'm not too crazy about the picture, but I do appreciate a lot of its visual and sensual appeal. It definitely crossed all the lines set by the standards of international cinema up until then, and though its conquests in sexuality also offer a lot of graphic violence, most of this film is a well realized study of passion and excitement that was made to arouse based on its erotic nature.

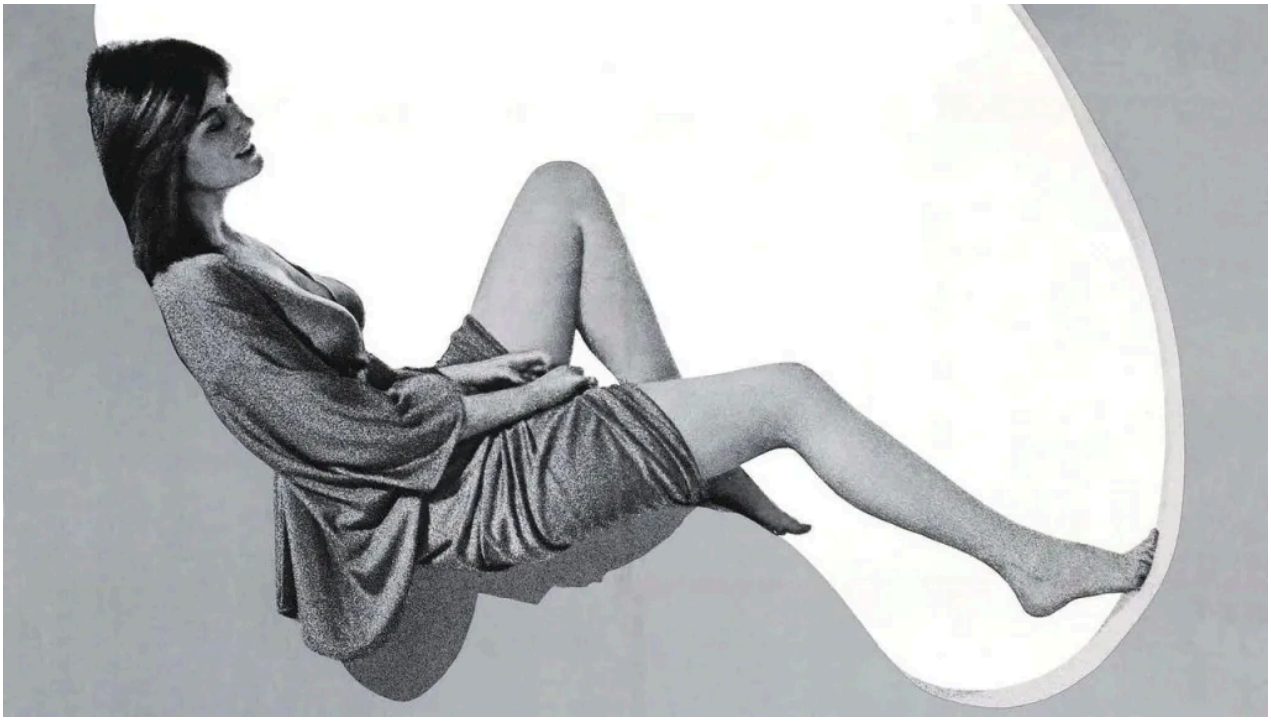
6. The Image (1975)

Radley Metzger is my favorite erotica filmmaker, and his 'The Image' is my favorite erotic feature of all time. I wouldn't call it

Image' is a mysterious little film about a love triangle based on sexual contact, consisting of an author, an old friend of his that he meets at a party, and her seemingly innocent sex slave. Though the film gets a lot rougher with its handling of the subject by the end, the majority of the picture does a lot to excite its audience.

From an extremely seductive soundtrack selection to a stimulating storytelling style, 'The Image' is only made better with its charming characters, all of whom seem to be impenetrably shrouded in mystery. Be warned, though, there are scenes involving BDSM here, and its depictions of such acts put all the films in and similar to the '50 Shades of Grey' trilogy to shame.

5. The Opening of Misty Beethoven (1976)



name changed to Henry Paris in the credits (some say he was also embarrassed about the production). The film is slightly on the pornographic side, and has been filmed with a more shaky, rugged approach. Having to do with a sexologist who trains a prostitute to become the Goddess of Passion, the film goes all the way (and possibly more) to showcase to its audience the, umm, "training process". It's a very lighthearted film, with a lot of jokes that do work, taking place in a superficial world with bits of reality forgone for the sake of comedy.

There are evidences of Metzger's trademark style here and there. For example, the apt soundtrack is not only catchy, but it aids the mood of the film very well. Overall, I'd call 'The Opening of Misty Beethoven' a screwball sex film that isn't as smart as many of the director's other works.

4. The Story of O (1975)

to take on a much bigger project, and boy, does it show! 'The Story of O' builds upon one of the most sacred elements of sexuality: secrecy. Shot in large castles all across France, it may be the strange characterization or improbable plot or a combination of the two that allow this film to be as mysterious as it is. Don't get me wrong, when it gets sexy, it gets sexy, but nudity and the lovemaking act itself aren't the only aspects of this film that arouse. Background elements also perform, or perhaps exemplify this apparent duty of the picture. The film plays around with class difference, domination, and seduction, themes that might've provided well to the controversies it arose during its original release. You can watch it here.

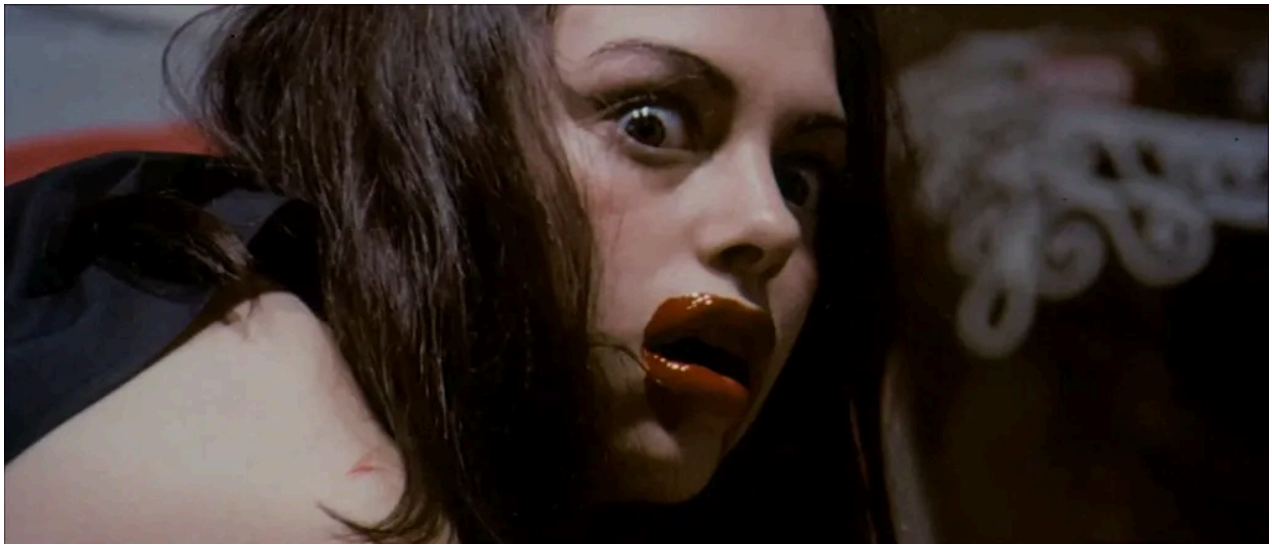
3. The Devil in Miss Jones (1973)

'The Devil in Miss Jones' is one of the most commercially successful pornographic films of all time. It was also the receiver

release of this film, most pornographic features had the plot playing a tiny element to showcase sex, taking advantage of the hit-and-run mindset of filmgoers to deliver plenty of nudity with a loose thread of a plot to follow. The director of this film initiated what came to be known as The Golden Age of Porn with his 1972 sex classic 'Deep Throat'. I'd hesitate to categorize it in any other genre of cinema, which is precisely why I've left it out of this list.

'Deep Throat' had a story (a fantastic achievement for a porno at the time) and characters with a shallow dent of depth to them, which revolutionized the industry. 'The Devil in Miss Jones' has amazing characters, sports undeniably masterful original music, and has powerful sex scenes that complement its well thought-out story. It's amazing how sensually captivating this film is.

2. Female Vampire (1975)



The second and higher-ranked Jess Franco film on this list is a clear example of the type of content that would follow to be part

of an honorable mention here), I have reason to believe it is his most erotic feature.

Starring his wife Lina Romay in the lead once again, her fearless and bold attitude as an actress coincides with Franco's eerie, surreal, and campy filmmaking style to epitomize cinematic sex so well that very few other features have been as good. Also carrying with it a nicely rounded plot that intrigues quite well, I'd say its only flaw as a film is its copious amount of nudity, which distracts from the purpose of the story. Whether the purpose of the feature was to tell the tale is up for debate though, and this flaw only aids this film in titillating its audience.

1. Score (1974)

character writing, and it gives the promise of a good time at the cinema. The third Radley Metzger film to feature on this list, I love this one a lot, because its environment is amazingly erotic on its own. Mostly taking place within the walls of a suburban house, 'Score' tells of a middle-aged "experienced" couple who invite a younger couple into their abode to try and get them drunk in order to have sex with them, all the while keeping score on the basis of all this between the two.

'Score' has a sexually stimulating aura about it, and though a lot of it is covered by Metzger's always-evident mystery, the film doesn't feel ominous like parts of 'The Image' (1975) and 'The Lickerish Quartet' (1970) do (owing to the aforementioned lack of straightforwardness). I'd even go as far as to define 'Score' as a celebration of sex, or possibly the ideologies surrounding sex that dominated the air during the '70s. It may very well be the most erotic feature of all time. 'Score' can be streamed here.

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